REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed December 11, 2003 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1, 2, 6, 10, and 18 have been amended. Claims 23-54. Claims 1-54 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 10, 18, 35, and 45 being the only independent claims. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as herein amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action mailed December 11, 2003, the drawings were objected to by the Draftsperson. New formal drawing are submitted concurrently herewith as replacement sheets of the originally filed drawings. In view of the formal drawings, the objection to the drawings should now be withdrawn.

Claim 18 is objected to as containing a minor informality. Claim 18 has been corrected in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the objection to claim 18 now be withdrawn.

Claims 1-2, and 16-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over EP 0 843 168 (Matsuda) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,911,129 (Towell).

Claims 5-6 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Matsuda and Towell and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,397,080 (Viktorsson).

Claims 3-4, 7-8, 10-15, and 20-22 were found to contain allowable subject matter. In view of the allowable subject matter, claim 10 is rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 10 is allowable. Dependent claims 11-15, being dependent on independent claim 10, are allowable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 10.

10-15

Before discussing the cited prior art and the Examiner's rejections of the claims in view of that art, a brief summary of the present invention is appropriate. The present invention relates to the use of voice avatars for wireless multiuser entertainment services. According to the present invention, a voice avatar module 100 includes a memory 130 storing a plurality of voice avatars. To use a voice avatar, a user selects a desired one of the plural voice avatars in memory 130. Once the voice avatar is selected, the user may enter any service which uses voice-based communication, such as a voice chat service 210 or a game service 220.

The voice avatar module 100 may be arranged in a wireless mobile terminal 200 (Fig. 2) or in a voice avatar server 500 (Fig. 3).

Independent claim 1 and independent claim 18 have each been amended to emphasize that the avatar module of the present invention selects a voice avatar from a plurality of voice avatars in a memory connected to the voice avatar module. Furthermore, independent claims 1 and 18 have been amended to recite that the input voice is transformed. The transformation is used so that the output voice remains emotionally expressive (page 7, lines 10-13 and 16-17).

Matsuda discloses an information processing apparatus for use in a three-dimensional virtual reality space sharing system. In Matsuda, client terminals 13 are connected to a shared server terminal 11, an information server terminal 10, and a mapping server terminal 12 by a global communication network 15. The shared server terminal 11 stores a three-dimensional virtual reality space (col. 9, lines 50-54). The shared server terminal 11 control update objects (avatars) of user in the virtual reality space so that a plurality of user share the virtual reality space (col. 10, lines 16-22). The Examiner states that col. 13, line 35 to col. 14, line 7; and Fig. 7 disclose the claimed voice avatar module and memory with a plurality of voice avatars. However, this section of Matsuda discloses only that the user's voice is changed according to set parameters. There is no

selection of a specific voice avatar from a plurality of voice avatars in a memory as recited in independent claims 1 and 18. In col. 2, lines 14-26, Matsuda refers to a voice avatar. However, this is merely the voice of the user which goes through the converting means and filter. This section of Matsuda also fails to teach or suggest that a voice avatar may be selected by a user from a memory having a plurality of voice avatars.

Towell fails to teach what Matsuda lacks. The Examiner depends on Towell for disclosing that wireless connection may be used. However, Towell converts a user's speech into speech segments and then encodes and decodes the basic speech segments to develop a new voice font. However, the encoding and decoding disclosed by Towell fails to teach or suggest the transformation of the input voice recited in independent claims 1 and 18. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 18 are allowable over Matsuda in view of Towell.

Viktorsson discloses a talking head avatar and teaches nothing about voice avatars. Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 18 are also allowable over Matsuda and Towell in view of Viktorsson.

New independent claim 35 is directed to a mobile terminal having the voice avatar module and includes similar limitations to independent claim 1. New independent claim 45 is directed to a server and includes similar limitations to independent claim 10. Accordingly it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 35 and 45 are allowable for at least the same reasons as independent claims 1 and 10.

Dependent claims 2-9, 11-17, 19-34, 36-44, and 47-54, each being dependent on one of independent claims 1, 10, 18, 35, and 45, are deemed allowable for the same reasons expressed above with respect to independent claim 1, 10, 18, 35, and 45.

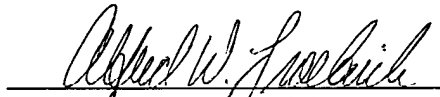
The application is now deemed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is solicited.

A check in the amount $748.00 is enclosed in payment for the addition of 32 new claims in excess of 20 and 2 independent claims in excess of three.

If any further fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

COHEN, PONTANI, LIEBERMAN & PAVANE

By 

Alfred W. Froebrich
Reg. No. 38,887
551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1210
New York, New York 10176
(212) 687-2770

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